

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are now pending in the application. Amendments have been made to the specification and claims to overcome the objections to the specification and rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b), § 103(a) and § 112. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

It is noted that the Examiner relies on the following four (4) cites in the outstanding Office Action which do not appear on the accompanying Notice of References Cited and respectfully request that the Examiner issue a Notice of References Cited with these documents listed:

US 6,150,962	Rossman
US 2002/0093436 A1	Lien
US 5,854,624	Grant
US 5,403,202	Roehling

SPECIFICATION

The specification stands objected to for certain informalities. Applicants have amended the specification according to the Examiner's suggestions. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 6, 18 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being unpatentable. Applicants have amended those claims according to the Examiner's requests. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejections are respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102 AND § 103

Independent claim 1 is rejected in light of the disclosure in Kuschel, German Gebrauchsmuster (No. DE 295-12-808 U1) and the other independent claim 24 is rejected in light of the combined disclosure in Kuschel and Lien (US Pat Appl'n Pub. No. US 2002/0093436 A1).

Regarding Lien, which does not appear on the accompanying Notice of References Cited, it is noted that the filing date of Lien is 12 January 2001. The US filing date of the present application is 29 November 2001, and this application entered National Phase processing from PCT application no. PCT/GB01/01444 filed 30 March 2001, which claims priority from four GB applications, namely GB 00 07 697.4 filed 30 March 2000, GB 00 11 962.8 filed 18 May 2000, GB 00 26 806.0 filed 02 November 2000 and GB 00 26 807.8 also filed 02 November 2000. Thus, the priority dates of the PCT application all fall before the filing date of Lien.

The proposed amendment to independent claims 1 and 24 describes two distinctively different features. The first is a stand for supporting the electronic processing device, and the second is that the sheets of the input apparatus are configured to be foldable through at least one region representing a data item.

The Applicants' invention utilizes a plurality of sheets configured to produce an output in response to a mechanical interaction. This feature is to be found in the present independent claims.

Kuschel does not teach input apparatus comprising a plurality of sheets. In contrast, the Kuschel device (3) utilizes a printed circuit board foil (8) and a matrix of touch keys (10). The Kuschel keyboard (3) is foldable around the pocket computer (1).

Figure 2 shows two lines across the unfolded keyboard (3). It is considered that these lines are indicative of fold lines corresponding to the dimensions of the computer case (1).

Kuschel describes that to protect the touch key mounts against damage, the mobility of the keyboard (3) is restrictable by anti-bending elements 11, two forms of which are shown in Figures 5 and 6, to prevent bending in the area of the touch keys (10). On this basis, it is considered that the lines shown in Figure 3 are indicative of fold lines between row/columns of keys in the matrix. Kuschel therefore does not teach that the device disclosed therein will withstand folding in a key region.

The Applicants' invention provides input apparatus having a sheet construction that allows the apparatus to be foldable through a key region. This feature enables the input apparatus to be wrapped around an electronic processing device and to bend around the contours thereof. Thus, an input apparatus according to the present invention is advantageously suitable for use with different electronic processing devices having different dimensions, as can be seen from comparison of Figures 24 and 28.

Lien does not teach an input apparatus comprising a stand for supporting the electronic processing device.

In addition, Lien does not teach using an input apparatus to provide a protective cover for a portable electronic processing device. Instead, the Lien keyboard is provided with a foldable holding case (7), which provides a storage carry case when the keyboard is not in use (Figure 6) and a support surface and keyboard operation aid when the keyboard is in use (Figure 3).

Although the Lien keyboard is foldable, fold lines (51) are formed therein. Hinges in the foldable holding case (7) correspond with these fold lines (51). There is no teaching in Lien relating to folding a keyboard in the same way as that described in the present application in relation to the present invention input apparatus.

Kuschel and Lien do not have input apparatus comprising a sheet construction that allows the apparatus to be foldable through a key region and an input apparatus comprising a stand for supporting the electronic processing device. Therefore, Kuschel and Lien, alone or combined, do not teach Applicants' invention.

CLAIMS AS AMENDED

In order to more fully distinguish applicant's invention from prior art, claims have been amended and newly added to recite:

[Claim 1] and a stand for supporting said electronic processing device; wherein said sheets are configured to be foldable into a wrapped configuration around said electronic processing device to provide a protective cover, and said sheets are configured to be foldable through at least one of said plurality of regions.

[Claim 24] said input apparatus further comprising a stand for supporting said electronic processing device; wherein said sheets are configured to be foldable into a wrapped configuration around said device to provide a protective cover, and said sheets are configured to be foldable through at least one of said plurality of regions.

[Claim 25] A manually operable input apparatus for a portable electronic processing device, defining a plurality of regions each representing a respective data item, said manually operable input apparatus comprising a plurality of fabric sheets configured to produce a response to a mechanical interaction, said sheets comprising conductive fibres, wherein:

said sheets are configured to be foldable into a wrapped configuration around said electronic processing device to provide a protective cover.

[Claim 26] A manually operable input apparatus for a portable electronic processing device, defining a plurality of regions each representing a respective data item, said input apparatus comprising a plurality of sheets configured to produce a response to a mechanical interaction, and a stand for supporting said electronic processing device in a different plane to that of said input apparatus, said stand

comprising connecting means for releasably engaging said electronic processing device with said input apparatus, wherein:

said sheets are configured to be foldable into a wrapped configuration around said electronic processing device to provide a protective cover; and

said connecting means are configured to retain an electrical connection between said input apparatus and said electronic processing device during folding.

Applicant respectfully asserts that independent claims 1, 24, 25 and 26 recite novel subject matter neither taught, suggested, or motivated by Kuschel, and Lien, and thus are in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of claims 1-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b), § 103(a) and § 112 based on their dependency from allowable claims.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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